

CONFERENCE Connection

Alabama • Georgia • Mississippi
South Carolina • Tennessee • NW Florida



SOUTHEAST UCC Conference

February 1, 2016

Jottings from June

As we complete the work of closing the financial records for 2015, I find myself reflecting on themes of generosity and abundance. I am so grateful to all the churches and individuals that contributed to the ministry of the Southeast Conference. The monetary gifts are important to under-gird and sustain the expenses associated with our ministry. I also am grateful for all the hours that individuals in this Conference devote to their local church and the ministry of the Conference.



Much of that time is sacrificial giving as people choose to be engaged as ministry volunteers when there are things they could be doing with and for family, chores that need to be done, errands that need to be taken care of, and who among us couldn't use a little more time for rest and relaxation. Yet many show up to meetings, drive long distances, spend hours on the computer for web meetings, devote time to writing reports and committee emails. Jesus says, "I brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." (John 17:4). The labor of the faithful is a gift and blessing that sustains ministry as much as, and possibly even more than, the dollars that are invested in the ministry. We can all write a check and support a good organization but when we invest ourselves, our very being, in our ministry, we are giving the gift of life for the life of the church.

Anytime we give, we will reap God's bounty. We know we serve an abundant God, but we also serve a generous church. Scholarship applications are open for the Brown Endowment to provide resources for those studying for ministry. Amber Kirkendoll, pastor at Safe Harbor Family Church in Flowood, Mississippi, is a 2016 Brown Scholar receiving a generous grant toward her studies. The 55 churches of the Southeast Conference make up about 1% of the total congregations in the entire United Church of Christ, yet we have five Neighbors in Need grant recipients in our Conference-Open Table, Mobile; Church of the Savior, Knoxville; Praxis, Americus; Unity Montgomery; and Circular, Charleston. In addition, we have given out 12 local church grants from the Transforming Churches, Transforming Lives capital campaign and the next round of applications is open. All of the gifts are possible only because you and others gave so generously to special offerings and Our Churches Wider Mission and in support of the Conference.

Allow me to imitate Paul from 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3:

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Coming Events

SEC Staff Meeting
Thu, February 11, 2016
Conference Office

Executive Committee
Tue, February 16, 2016
Web and Teleconference

Application Deadline for Conference Grants
March 18, 2016

Conference Staff

June Boutwell
Designated

All you servants of the church,

To the churches of the Southeast Conference in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace. We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's UCC Yearbook Reporting Time Again!

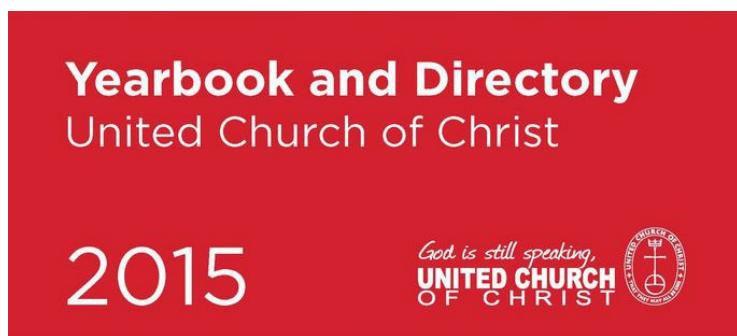
The United Church of Christ Yearbook and Directory provides statistics as reported by local churches and conferences of the UCC. In addition, the Yearbook serves as a organizational directory including the various offices, persons elected by the General Synod to constitute the governing boards of the Ministries and other bodies.

You, the churches, will add your statistics into the National database right from your own church location.

Each church is asked to submit information such as membership numbers, financial data, and contact information. Last year, the Southeast Conference, which was one of the Conferences on the bottom of the reporting list, received an incentive from the UCC because we improved out reporting statistics so much. Let's try to get an incentive again this year.

You will find church yearbook reporting instructions, tip sheets, and video tutorials to help you submit your church's information online directly into the data hub on our website: <http://www.secucc.org/yearbook-instructions/>

The deadline for entering the data on the national database (so that it will appear in the 2015 stats) is MARCH 7, 2016!



From the Conference Office

50th Anniversary Calendars Proceeds are Due

*by Debbie Spearman, Generosity Coordinator
dspearman@secucc.org*

Hello SEC Churches! I wanted to check in about the Anniversary Calendars. I have heard from several churches... thank you for remitting a check. It is much appreciated. For those churches that still have several calendars on hand, the following are a few ideas to share with you from other churches.

1. Structure a Mission Moment on Sunday to describe what the Conference is celebrating this year and why this an important date in our history. I would recommend you use

Conference Minister
jaboutwell@secucc.org

Sarah Kim
Executive Director of Theological Education and Dean of PATHWAYS
skim@secucc.org

Debbie Spearman
Generosity Coordinator
dspearman@secucc.org

Don Harris
Director of Communications
communicationsdirector@secucc.org

Chris Lyman Waldron
IT Specialist
cwaldron@secucc.org

Geraldine P. Ryons-Hudson
Executive Administrator
ghudson@secucc.org

Mailing Address:
105 Courtland St NE
Atlanta, GA 30303-2422

Office Location:
125 Ellis St NE
Atlanta, GA 30303-2404

Phone: 404-607-1993
www.secucc.org

Connect with Us!



- some of the beautiful piece written for our last newsletter.
2. Invite your congregation to make a small donation to the Conference to help defray the cost of all the special events that will happen this year around the 50th Anniversary Celebration. You can use the Calendar as a gift to those who make a donation (kind of like a Public Radio appeal). Make the appeal from the pulpit and have calendars available in your common area.
 3. Have your Church Council or Vestry purchase some calendars, so that the calendars can be given to new members as a gift, or for shut-ins, etc.

Any other ideas out there to share? Please let me know if you have any questions or need any further help!

Our History, Part 2: Reconciling Racial Differences

The Rev. Edward "Ed" Brown was a pivotal figure in arranging the union of bodies that became the Southeast Conference in 1966. Two years after the UCC's formation, Brown left ecumenical youth work in Europe in 1959 to help bring about non-violent solutions to racial problems in the southern United States. The UCC Board for Homeland Ministries employed Brown as a full-time "consultant on race relations" who was assigned to the Southeastern region to help reconcile racial differences between the Southeast Convention (white) and the Convention of the South (black) of the Congregational Christian Churches.



In recognition of our 50th Anniversary we have posted on our website excerpt from an interview Mike Stroud, director of the Project 66-16 history initiative, conducted with the Rev. Mr. Brown on June 16, 2009. Brown died on May 23, 2012.

[Read more...](#)

Spring 2016 Conference Grants

January 18 through March 18, 2016 marks the next application cycle for "Transforming Churches, Transforming Lives" Conference grants.



Transforming Churches • Transforming Lives
SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

During this time congregations may apply in 3 different ways:

1. Online at secucc.org/giving/capital-campaign-grant-application/
 2. Mailing a paper application to the Southeast Conference office
 3. Emailing an electronic application to dspearman@secucc.org
-

The Winter Youth Retreat was a Blast!

Over MLK weekend the Southern and Southeastern Conferences of the United Church of Christ held their annual Winter Youth Retreat at the Blowing Rock Conference Center. 180 youth and leaders came together to fellowship, worship, and play in the

snow. The featured speaker was Rev. Waltrina Middleton, the National UCC Minister for Youth Advocacy and Leadership Formation. [Read more...](#)



We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2016. Each month, we will publish a weekly list for the month and post them weekly on our Facebook page. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

- [Click here to download the entire 2016 prayer list](#)

Highlights for this month:

- Congratulations to **Anna Flowers** who was ordained at Kirkwood UCC on January 24. She is serving as Pastor for Children and Families at Greenpoint Reformed Church (Reformed Church of America and UCC) in Brooklyn, New York. [Read more...](#)
- **Raymonda Speller** will be installed at Community Congregational UCC in Montgomery on February 28.
- **Alice Kobayashi** died January 22. She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Carol Kobayashi and Rev. Timothy Downs of Atlanta and son and daughter-in-law Richard and Susan Kobayashi of Belmont, MA. A memorial service will be held at the Julia Thompson Smith Chapel on the campus of Agnes Scott College on February 15th at 11:00 am; Rev. Timothy Downs and Rev. Susannah Davis officiating. Memorial donations can be made to Kirkwood United Church of Christ, Atlanta, GA (www.kirkwooducc.com). [Read more...](#)
- A memorial service for **Rev. Harold M. Schoup** of the Uplands Retirement Community, Pleasant Hill, TN, was held January 16th at Pleasant Hill Community Church. We hold his wife of 61 years, The Rev. Dr. Ann Hausman Schoup, three children, Mrs. Sandra Richard, wife of Robert Richard, The Villages, FL, Mrs. Fauz Schoup, wife of Steven Brooks, Nashville, TN, The Rev. Bruce Schoup, who serves Peace Congregational Church in Clemson, and 3 grandchildren in prayer. Memorial gifts may be given to the Church Building Fund at 67 Church St., Pleasant Hill, TN 38578. [Read more...](#)
- Prayers for **Rev. Laurie Hill** as she recovers from surgery. She is serving Fairfield Glade Community Church in Tennessee.
- Prayers for **Rev. Bob Hurst**, United Church of Huntsville as he recovers from surgery.
- Continued prayers for **Rev. Michael McCaulley**, Peace Church, Clemson South Carolina as he continues treatment at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.
- For **Garden of Grace UCC** in Columbia South Carolina and the surrounding communities as they continue to recover from additional flooding.

Churches in Transition:

Oak Grove Congregational Christian, Pine Mountain Georgia;

Church of the Savior, Alpharetta Georgia; Pensacola UCC, Pensacola Florida; Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga Tennessee; Brookmeade Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Howard Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Beloved Community, Birmingham Alabama; First United Church, Belvidere Tennessee.

News from Around the Conference and Beyond

UCC Ministry Education Scholarships Available

Ministry Education Scholarships are available to those Members in Discernment who are preparing for authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ. [Read more...](#)

PATHWAYS Advisory Committee Seeking Members

The PATHWAYS Advisory Committee is seeking to add new members with specific expertise. PATHWAYS, a ministry of the Southeast Conference, provides online theological education for individuals throughout the United Church of Christ, including individuals preparing for authorized ministry. [Read more...](#)

Woodward Academy Chaplain Promotes Diversity

Katie O'Dunne, one of our Southeast Conference Members-in-Discernment, was featured in the Fall/Winter 2015 magazine of Woodward Academy. [Read more...](#)

Sister Helen Prejean Presentation at Uplands

Sister Helen Prejean, founder of the Ministry Against the Death Penalty, will be at Pleasant Hill UCC on March 13. Sister Helen, a Roman Catholic nun, is perhaps best known for her book, Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty. [Read more...](#)

Moral Political Organizing Leadership Institute and Summit

Please join Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, architect of North Carolina's Moral Monday/Forward Together Movement, on Monday, February 8, 2016 for a Moral Political Organizing Leadership Institute and Summit, MPOLIS. [Read more...](#)

Embrace Your Truth Workshop in Atlanta

Each of us have unlivable aspects of ourselves waiting to be brought forth, for our own fulfillment and for the healing of our world. In this powerful workshop you'll experience tools for discovering your divine potential and be inspired to live your truth courageously by hearing how a transgender woman used these tools to embrace her truth. [Read more...](#)

Building an Inclusive Church on March 11-12

Church of the Savior UCC-Alpharetta, GA has partnered with nearby Johns Creek Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)-Johns Creek, GA to co-sponsor an ecumenical workshop, "Building an Inclusive Church," March 11-12, 2016. [Read more...](#)

Pilgrim Art Ministry in Birmingham, AL

Noticed God Lately? Pilgrim Arts Ministry at Pilgrim Church, UCC in Birmingham can help your vision! You're invited to join a gathering of folks in the Birmingham area using different forms of art, from oils to coloring books, to express their individual spiritual journeys. [Read more...](#)

Healthy Boundaries for Clergy and Church Leaders

The Southeast Conference, in partnership with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia, are pleased to offer two Healthy Boundaries training sessions for clergy and church leaders. [Read more...](#)